

# The American RECORD GUIDE

FOR THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



NOVEMBER, 1946 VOL. XIII, NO. 11  
EDITED BY PETER HUGH REED  
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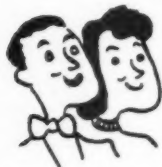
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# COLUMBIA RECORDS



# The American RECORD GUIDE

November, 1946    ▲    Vol. XIII, No. 3

formerly THE AMERICAN MUSIC LOVER



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November, 1946

## Editorial Notes

● Last month RCA Victor celebrated the press-  
ing of its billionth record. Unquestionably,  
this is a production milestone which no other  
company will achieve for some time to come.  
Behind those billion records goes 48 years of  
uninterrupted record manufacture. It was in  
1898 that Eldridge Johnson founded the Victor  
Talking Machine Company and commenced  
the manufacture of the victrola phonograph  
and the improved "lateral-cut" record, which  
Emil Berliner had invented 14 years earlier.  
"The name Johnson chose for his company,"  
says James W. Murray, Vice President in  
charge of RCA Victor Record Activities, "was  
symbolic of his victory over the obstacles that  
threatened to defeat Berliner and himself in  
their attempts to make records and phono-  
graphs commercially feasible as devices for  
home entertainment." Since those early days,  
many obstacles have been met and overcome  
by the Victor Talking Machine Company and  
its present successor.

Victor's billionth record, and its thousands  
of counterparts, is a non-breakable Red Seal  
DeLuxe disc containing two famous Sousa  
marches—*Stars and Stripes Forever* and *Semper  
Fidelis* performed by the Boston Symphony  
Orchestra, conducted by Koussevitzky. The  
Boston Symphony was the first full-size sym-  
phony orchestra to record on Red Seal records,  
and *Stars and Stripes Forever*, it is of interest to  
know, was the first march that Sousa and his  
band recorded for Victor in 1903.

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To make available for musical listeners worth-  
while but seldom-heard musical works, a new  
record company has been formed. This is Con-  
cert Hall Society, Inc., which will sponsor  
limited editions of unrecorded contemporary,  
classic and pre-classic music. The recordings  
are available by subscription only and are  
limited to 2,000 numbered copies pressed on a  
ruby-red non-breakable vinylite material. Each  
set is housed in an attractive album with an-  
alytical and historical notes on the music writ-  
ten by a group of eminent musicologists.

Of all the post-war smaller record companies  
none have undertaken a more worthy job than  
Concert Hall Society, Inc. The limited edi-  
tions of books has long been pursued, but in

the record field we have never had an organization which made available to the record collector choice discs which were issued in numbered editions. True, we have had the fine Society Sets, made in England, but these were not numbered and the extent of pressings made of any given issue was not ascertainable. Prior to the war, this magazine had its own record society—The Friends of Recorded Music—which brought forward some thirty discs, most of which never exceeded the first edition which was limited to 500 copies. Our record issues were marked "First" or "Second Pressing" on the label, as the case may have been, but although we intended these markings to give value to the discs we did not number them individually as in the case of a limited book edition. The distinction is important as anyone knows who has bought limited editions of books or art. One can imagine a few years hence the value that the record collector will place on the first 100 sets of the Concert Hall Society issues.

The quality of the reproduction of the Concert Hall releases is exceptional in its clarity and tonal realism, and the vinylite material used is of the finest quality. We have heard a number of the test pressings and have been greatly impressed with them both as performances and as recordings. The plan of this company to begin with the music, which is chosen on the basis of merit and not on the availability of artists, and then to select the artist who is best suited to make the recording, is a laudable one. Too many recordings have been issued during the years that began with the artist; a policy which has not insured the best performance at all times. As one of the officials of Concert Hall states: "The artists vanish; only the music remains—an eternal challenge to talent and genius... Unlike the commercial standard repertory, the artists who perform our works are commissioned not on the basis of their popular reputation alone, but on their talent and artistic integrity."

Concert Hall Society aims to have eleven albums a year, distributed to members in eight issues over a period of eight or nine months. The first issue, Prokofiev's *String Quartet No. 2*, played by the Gordon String Quartet, has already appeared; it is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of the magazine. The eleven albums will cost \$105, which includes Federal Tax. Payment may be made in full or in part. For full information the interested reader is advised to write to Concert Hall Society, Inc., 250 West 57 St., New York 19, N.Y. Space does not permit us to give the titles of the first eleven issues, but suffice it say these include orchestral, vocal and chamber works.

Although we are deeply appreciative of the interest shown by countless readers, we must

ask indulgence of those who write long letters asking for advice and assistance on sundry matters. The work of assembling the periodical these days is highly exacting, and it is almost impossible to cover the entire field in one month. Those who have written inquiring about builders of custom phonographs will have to be patient for a time. The several builders of our acquaintance in whom we have complete faith are swamped with work and unable to take on any new assignments at this time. Although it is possible to recommend good equipment that can be assembled at home, such equipment after assembly requires complete laboratory tests to assure its ideal workability. A well-built custom job will reproduce almost flawlessly most of the existent recordings of our times. When we have readers write us about their "unexcelled", privately built "super-duper" equipment which does not reproduce all recordings satisfactorily, we know that their so-called fine equipment has definite flaws in it. The belief that a lot of service men, who acquired some knowledge during the war about assembling a phonograph and radio unit, are qualified to build a "perfect" set is not true. We have had occasion to hear some units assembled by well-meaning people, whose knowledge of reproduction was by no means fully adequate, and in all cases we found the reproduction far from completely satisfactory.

This past month we have heard quite a number of the post-war superior machines—the Fisher outfit and the famous Decola from England. We do not regard it as in our province to survey phonograph equipment and recommend one unit above another to our readers. We have read the well-meaning remarks of a number of writers on recorded music regarding phonograph equipment and have found them far from satisfactory. Next month, we hope to comment on some of the new equipment, to present some facts, but since it would take a great deal more time than any of us associated with this magazine have to give what we regard as a definitive analysis of a machine, our comments will of a necessity be far from conclusive. One has to "live" with a machine and make endless tests with all sorts of recordings to give a real rating to its overall value. An interesting, but far from conclusive rating of new equipment was given in the October issue of *Fortune*, in an article called *Music for the Home*. We recommend readers to look up this article at their local library if it is impossible to procure a copy of the magazine. Those who have followed the work of this periodical over a period of time will find a great deal that we have had to say in the past restated in this article. Perhaps the most important restatement is *Fortune's* contention that neither wire, tape nor film musical reproduction will replace records for a long time to come.



Dr. Weissmann  
conducting the  
RCA-Victor  
Orchestra.

## FRIEDER WEISSMANN REMINISCES

In an Interview with the Editor

### Part I

Dr. Frieder Weissmann, the German-born Maestro, has made as many recordings as any conductor now living. They number more than 1500. He was responsible for the majority of the orchestral discs emanating from Germany from 1921 to 1933. As a pioneer in his field, he—like many another before him—hardly got his due at first, for the conductor in the early days of the phonograph was none too flatteringly represented by the reproduction of the work he put on records. In the beginning it was the voice of the singer that alone was reproduced with a sufficient semblance of lucidity to bequeath to posterity an acceptable facsimile of the artist's work. What went on behind the singer by way of accompaniment was hardly complimentary to the director of the so-called orchestra, and he—whoever he was—generally remained a non-entity on the labels of the majority of old records. The reasons for this are not dif-

ficult to understand, for the orchestra behind the singer was merely a background of jumbled sound sadly lacking in symmetry and tonal refinement. What a conductor was capable of accomplishing could not be successfully conveyed in recording. His work closely resembled the early wirephotos in which only an outline of the original is apparent with barely recognizable features and no depth of prospective. Even in the early days of electrical recording, things were not much better, for dynamics were two-dimensional—either *mezzo-forte* or *forte*. At best, up until the late 1920s, the conductor was unfavorably represented by such works as he put on records. Many noted orchestral leaders looked upon recording with scorn. But let Dr. Weissmann tell us about the viewpoints of musicians in that early period.

"I was constantly taken to task by my colleagues," he says, "for spending so much time on recordings. This was in the early

1920s. Clemens Krauss, the Viennese conductor, for example, contended that records would never represent the true picture of the score and he refused seriously to consider the phonograph. His viewpoint was shared by many others—indeed, the majority. But I could not accept or endorse their feelings. I remembered the early days of photography and I had faith in this new 'photography of sound'; it too would develop, I felt, for science was on the march and the technical men were consistently working toward a betterment of sound reproduction. Too, they needed the cooperation and advice of a musician, and I was only too happy to serve in this capacity.

"In time, toward the late 'Twenties, Krauss and many other scoffers at recording saw fit to change their viewpoints. Maybe the expected royalties had something to do with their change of heart, for records were selling in large quantities. It is true that the early orchestral discs, even in the first years of electric reproduction, did not represent a conductor in a satisfactory manner. There was no nuance of line, and a pitiful semblance of dynamics. A true crescendo or diminuendo was utterly impossible. It was the day of the singer, and fortunately we had some great voices to perpetuate for posterity. But, if all of us had scorned the leadership of the orchestral accompaniment behind the singer, I hesitate to think of how the singer would have fared."

#### His First Recording

Dr. Weissmann began his recording career in the latter part of the acoustic era (1921) with the Parlophone Company, then a small organization which was, however, destined in a relatively short time to become one of the largest and most powerful concerns in Germany. It was linked with the Odeon Company, and the two formed a famous combine in their day. At the time he began his first recording work, Dr. Weissmann was an assistant conductor at the Berlin State Opera.

"It all started," he told us, "with the noted soprano, Emmy Betterdorf, signing a contract to make some records. Her first was to be 'Senta's Ballad' from *The Flying Dutchman*. I had coached and prepared her for the role at the opera, and she desired me to conduct the orchestra for her first record-

ing. We had only a small room in which to function and a not too large a horn. The situation looked rather hopeless, but I set about to make the best of things and to provide as near a semblance of a well-sounding orchestral accompaniment for a fine singer as was feasible. I made many tests for placing the orchestra, which was a small ensemble of twenty-five pieces. We never used more than thirty pieces in those days even for my early symphonic recordings. Wagner would perhaps have shouted 'sacrilegious', but I think he would have sanctioned the venture none the less. He would have seen the value of having his music in reproduction. The low strings, in those days, did not record so we used bass tubas in their place. These are the instruments that give out the growls in the orchestral background of so many acoustic discs.

#### Early Efforts

"Considering the limitations with which we dealt, it was remarkable the results we obtained. I can recall an acoustic recording we made of the 'Quintet' from *Die Meistersinger*, a most ambitious effort for its time. The singers included Emmy Bittendorf; the Swedish tenor, Carl Martin Oehmann; the splendid baritone, Michael Bohnen; and the well known contralto, Karen Branzell. The artists assembled around a horn a trifle larger than the ring one can make with one's arms, and with their arms about each others necks they sang as best they could. That disc in its day made recording history—in Germany, at least. Despite the shortcomings of orchestral records, there was a demand for them, so I was asked to undertake the waxing of some symphonies. I had already made many overtures and various orchestral excerpts from operas which were selling very well indeed. I did all nine of Beethoven's symphonies with the exception of the finale of the last; a chorus, singers and orchestra could not be assembled before a horn, and furthermore I doubt that that little room in which we worked would have held such a crowd. We barely had space enough to move around as it was when we had the 30-piece ensemble in it."

A lot of Dr. Weissmann's phonographic work is buried in the fields of forgotten discs. "It is perhaps just as well," he says, "that the early experimental work of the

pioneer does not survive. In the field of recorded music its artistic values are controversial. The acoustic recordings, for example, of Artur Nikisch do not represent this great conductor as I and other musicians remember him. Today, we make recordings that are realistic in sound, a better 'photograph' of the conductor's artistry than those we made in the early days. The conductor for many years, even after the electric reproduction began, was associated by the greater majority of people with singers; on his own, he hardly occupied in their minds a position commensurate to his talents. As the art of reproduction advanced, things gradually changed and the conductor slowly but surely came into his own. I never doubted that he would, even back in the acoustic days."

Of the radical change that electric reproduction made in the recording studio, and the part that he played in advancing conditions in Germany, Dr. Weissmann spoke with great enthusiasm.

#### Stokowski's Records

"I can remember as though it were yesterday when I got my initial shipment of Stokowski's early electric discs. Suddenly, we were hearing real basses, the rich vibrant tone of the cellos and the double basses. But there was something else, an over-all resonance around and about the orchestra that had never been heard in a record before. It was labelled by the recording engineers as 'room-resonance'. Immediately, I influenced Parlophone to build a large studio to obtain this desired effect which enhanced those discs from America. In time, recording engineers came from America and taught our men the new system, and then in time our engineers made advancements on what they learned. How well I recall my colleagues' attitude when I played for them those early electric records from America; they still persisted that recording was not to be taken seriously, that Stokowski, myself and others like us were wasting our time.

"But there were a few prominent men who shared my enthusiasm. By 1921, the noted Wagnerian conductor, Karl Muck, saw the value of recording. And long before electric reproduction came into existence, an elder colleague of mine, the eminent

pianist, teacher and conductor, Eduard Moerike, had joined ranks with me to make a series of orchestra recordings, and when the new electric discs came into being he was as eager and anxious as I to make new ones. There are those of us today who still highly value his electric versions—made the year before his untimely death in 1929 at the age of 52—of Smetana's tone poem *The Moldau* and the overture from *The Bartered Bride* as well as other selections. When I was busily engaged in waxing the nine Beethoven symphonies in the early 'Twenties, Moerike was also busily engaged in recording the Strauss tone poems and symphonies. He did them all. The only recording until recently of Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* and the only complete *Aus Italien* were by him. He also recorded Strauss' early tone poem, *Macbeth*, one of the composer's best scores—a work I admire so much I hope someday to record it myself. In my estimation, it is an unjustly neglected composition; far ahead of the composer's *Also Spake Zarathustra*."

Dr. Weissmann was born at Langen, Southern Germany, of a Finnish father and a German mother. From the former he inherits his intense blue eyes and his light brown hair. Like many other musicians, his family intended him to follow a business career and accordingly he studied law at the University of Munich, where he acquired a degree as Doctor of Philosophy.

#### Music Comes First

"But, I also studied music," he told us. "And, I knew, even when I got my degree that I was going to make music my career."

After five years at the State Opera in Berlin (1920-1925), he was appointed musical director of the opera houses at Muenster and Knoigsberg. "There, I was able to repay my friend and teacher, Max von Schillings," he said, "under whom I had studied at Munich and at Heidelberg. It is to him that I owe my success, for it was he who obtained for me the conductorial post at the Berlin State Opera. He supervised my career and I think on him always as a second father. At Konigsberg, I decided to revive interest in his opera, *Mona Lisa*. Obtaining the singers Micael Eohnen and Barbara Kemp, I prepared the opera for production, and then invited my good friend von Schil-

lings to conduct the performance. The revival was a huge success and von Schillings was deeply grateful. Bohnen and Kemp were hailed for their portrayals of the leading roles. This led some years later to their singing the parts in the presentation of this opera at the Metropolitan.

"Meantime, the success of *Mona Lisa* prompted me to prepare a performance of *Der Rosenkavalier* and to invite Strauss to officiate as conductor. Later, I prepared a performance of Pfitzner's *Palestrina* and had the composer again as the conductor for the occasion. *Palestrina* is an unjustly neglected score, and—I believe—a misunderstood one. It is a product of the German philosophy of meditation, a brooding mixture of pessimism and of life. It is not an opera of the *verisimo* (realistic) school, but rather a product of a dream-world—one that Schopenhauer might have created. Those interested to know this music should look up the *Preludes of Acts I, II and III*, which Pfitzner recorded some years ago for Polydor (discs 95459/61). As preludes, they utilize some of the essence of the succeeding drama. They are in their way miniature tone poems, like the overtures to Weber's operas and the several that Beethoven wrote for his one opera, *Fidelio*. There is in them a similarity in spirit to the preludes to Act II of *Tristan* and Act III of *Die Meistersinger*. The philosophy of meditation, of which I have spoken, is well expressed in these excerpts."

#### South America Calls

From 1931 to 1933, Dr. Weissmann was the conductor of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, and in the latter year a frequent guest conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. In 1934, he was engaged to conduct the Concertgebouw (Mengelberg) Orchestra of Amsterdam in a series of radio broadcasts in its native city, Rotterdam and The Hague. In the same year, he went for the first time to Argentina, following an invitation from Buenos Aires to conduct Richard Strauss' opera, *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, and to give a series of symphony concerts. For the years to come until 1939, he was active in Holland during the European season (from November to April) conducting for the Hilversum Radio Station A. V. R. O. opera performances, and during the South Ameri-

can season (from May to October) with symphonic concerts in Buenos Aires.

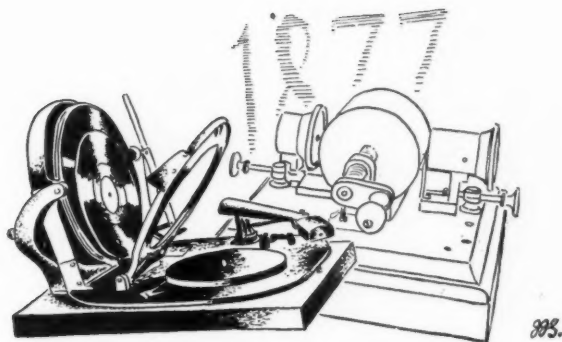
Regarding his Buenos Aires' activities, Dr. Weissmann tells us: "Although I conducted symphonic concerts in the Teatro Colon and also for several seasons some ballet performances with the excellent ballet ensemble of that theatre (paranetically, I might mention I conducted the premiere of Bela Bartok's ballet, *The Wooden Prince*), my biggest work was with the Radio Splendid, the largest broadcasting concern in Argentina. Here, I was engaged to give 56 concerts a season, two a week, with a magnificent orchestra. These concerts, sponsored by the Standard Oil of South America, were prepared with considerable care—we had daily rehearsals. They were made free to the public because the heads of the radio concern and of the Standard Oil Company decided to issue tickets for which the general public could write in."

#### NBC Imitates

The success of this unusual radio venture had an interesting sequel. One of the officials of the National Broadcasting Company in New York came down to Buenos Aires to hear the concerts and to acquaint himself with the manner in which they were managed. Later, the National Broadcasting Company decided to pursue a similar course of concerts, and accordingly through the mediation of Samuel Chotzinoff, who was sent to Italy to invite Maestro Toscanini to return to America, the noted Italian conductor was induced to begin the now famous winter series of the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The management of these was patterned after the concerts given by the Radio Splendid at Buenos Aires. "And so," says Dr. Weissmann, "radio on two continents in the Western Hemisphere established a new precedent for the disbursement of symphonic music for the general public. It was not long before Europe followed."

In the season of 1937-38, Dr. Weissmann made his American debut with the Cincinnati Symphony, and the following year he conducted the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra in its Stadium season. At this time, the critic on the *New Yorker* wrote: "About ten years ago, it seemed as if most of the orchestral phonograph recordings from Eu-

(Continued on page 72)



# PHONOGRAPH

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# PREDICTIONS

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## 1878

That indefatigable researcher in matters pertaining to the early days of the phonograph and recording, Mr. Angus Joss of Joliet, Illinois, called our attention recently to a short piece called *Anticipation Concerning the Phonograph* by Dr. William F. Channing which appeared originally in the *Providence Journal* and was later reprinted in the April 1878 issue of *Popular Science Monthly*.

Says Mr. Joss: "Here is something worthy of reprinting, for the author in the infancy of the phonograph predicts the historical library, the juke box, the improved records and even electroplating."

Predictions are more often than not the utterances of dreamers or those who find it difficult to adjust themselves with the present. It is seldom that the prophet looks into the future and sees "which grain will grow and which will not". Musical history is filled with absurd predictions concerning artistic values by well-meaning critics and writers who seemingly saw little good in things that were new. Dr. Channing's vision of the future of the phonograph could not have been regarded in its day as any-

thing but the vision of a dreamer, and yet in the light of later events it becomes an interesting document. It might be well to recall to the reader that Edison took out his initial patent on December 19, 1877 for "the first true talking machine for the audible reproduction of sound", and that it was this crude machine which incited Dr. Channing's predictions. It is a pity that recording was not able to achieve in the "dozen years" of which Dr. Channing speaks the perpetuation of such famous singers as Christine Nilsson, Jenny Lind, Marietta Alboni, and Anna Louise Cary, for reproductions of their voices would have been valued documents today. Dr. Channing could not have foreseen the advent of the sound-movie, which has given and will continue to give us "reproductions of the sounds of Nature, and of noises familiar and unfamiliar". Nor could he have predicted the use of recordings of sound-effects as we know them today via the radio and elsewhere. Had he been able to do this, we think he might have shuddered at his vision.

The reader by now will be more concerned with the good doctor and his predictions

than with our comments, and so we present herewith his short but interesting article as it was originally contained in the *Popular Science Monthly*, sixty-eight years ago:

"The sheet of tin-foil or other plastic material receiving the impressions of sound will be stereotyped so as to be multiplied and made durable. Or the cylinder will be made of a material plastic when used, and hardening afterward. Thin sheets of papier-mâché, or of various substances which soften by heat, would be of this character. Having provided thus for the durability of the phonotype plate (a better name than phonograph), it will be very easy to make it separable from the cylinder producing it, and attachable to a corresponding cylinder any, where or at any time. There will doubtless be a standard of diameter and pitch of screw for phonotype letters, which will talk at any time in the friend's voice when put upon the instrument. How startling, also, it will be to reproduce and hear at pleasure the voice of the dead! All of these things are to be common, every-day experiences within a few years. It will be possible, a generation hence to take a file of phonotype letters, spoken at different ages by the same person, and hear the early prattle, the changing voice, the manly tones, and also the varying manner and moods of the speaker—so expressive of character—from childhood up!

"These are some of the private applications. For public uses, we shall have galleries where phonotype sheets will be preserved as photographs and books now are. The utterances of great speakers and singers will there be kept for a thousand years. In these galleries, spoken languages will be preserved from century to century with all the peculiarities of pronunciation, dialect, and brogue. As we go now to see the stereopticon, we shall go to the public halls to hear these treasures of speech and song brought out and reproduced as loud as, or louder than, when first spoken or sung by the truly great ones of the earth. The ease with which the phonotype cylinders may be stereotyped or electrotyped and multiplied, has been spoken of. Certainly, within a dozen years, some of the great singers will be induced to sing into the ear of the phonograph, and the electrotyped cylinders thus obtained will be put into the handorgans of the streets, and we shall hear the actual voice

of Christine Nilsson, of Miss Cary, or even of Jenny Lind and Alboni, ground out at every corner!

"In public exhibitions, also, we shall have reproductions of the sounds of Nature, and of noises familiar and unfamiliar. Nothing will be easier than to catch the sounds of the waves on the beach, the roar of Niagara, the discords of the streets, the noises of animals, the pulling and rush of the railroad train, the rolling of thunder, or even the tumult of battle.

"Edison has recently stated that his best instrument will now talk so as to be heard at a distance of 175 feet. The conditions for increasing the sound are so simple that there can be no doubt of any desirable extension in this direction."

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### Dr. Weissman Reminisces

(Continued from page 70)

rope were conducted by a mysterious maestro named Weissmann. This Weissmann was a versatile fellow, who could conduct anything—symphonies, operatic excerpts, oddities from the orchestral repertoire, and accompaniments for some of Richard Tauber's best operetta offerings. He took over all duties with such apparent authority that one set him down as a possibly white-bearded veteran who was at least old enough to have been a pupil of Franz Liszt. Last week... he appeared at the Stadium Concerts and turned out to be a trim, brown-haired young man. His debut with the Philharmonic-Symphony demonstrated that he must have been born with a conductor's baton in his hand, for he went about his business with command and assurance."

"The conductor on the Continent has to be versatile," says Dr. Weissmann. "He seldom specializes. As to being born with a baton in my hands, I sometimes feel as though that were the case. These little sticks can become a very intimate and essential part of a musician's life."

Last year Dr. Weissmann resumed his recording career when he became associated with RCA-Victor as a conductor for some of that company's newest operatic records, and since that time he has been one of the most active conductors in the Victor stu-

(Continued on page 93)



Sammarco as Cascart in the original production of "Zaza" (1900), with an unnamed singer as Zaza's mother.

## SOME HISTORIC RECORD RELEASES

By Stephen Fassett

ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*—Largo *al factotum*; and DONIZETTI: *La Favorita*—*A tanto amor*; sung by Mario Sammarco. CRS 10-inch disc No. 14, Price \$2.00.

▲ At a time when first-class Italian baritones were astonishingly plentiful and when competition was far more formidable than it is today, Mario Sammarco quickly sang his way to enduring success. Born in Palermo on December 13, 1873, he studied with Cantelli, made his debut in Puccini's *Le Villi* at Milan in 1894, and soon became famous throughout Italy. Later he was acclaimed in Spain, Portugal, Russia, Poland, Belgium, Germany, Austria and the Americas. At Covent Garden in London he was a favorite from 1904 until 1914 and his popularity in the United States began on February 1, 1907, when he made his debut with the Manhattan Opera Company in New York City as Tonio in *I Pagliacci*. In 1918 he was appointed to the directorate of La Scala in Milan and it was in that city that he died on January 24, 1930.

Although Sammarco was a prolific recorder, having sung for Pathé, Gramophone,

Fonotopia and Victor, his records are not very common in this country and his voice is not as well known to modern collectors as the singing of Ruffo, Amato and Scotti who were his contemporaries and his peers. Some authorities believe that Sammarco's records seldom if ever did justice either to his voice or to his artistry; I myself have found many of them disappointing when judged in the light of his great reputation. Fortunately, however, these two dubbings made from Pathé discs which were originally waxed about forty years ago provide as satisfactory reproductions of his voice as I have ever heard. Owing in part, at least, to the fact that they were vertical-cut or hill-and-dale recordings, Pathé discs were generally more brilliant and life-like in sound than the average lateral-cut disc of the period and therefore lend themselves particularly well to the process of electrical re-recording. In this case, the transference from the vertical-cut to the lateral-cut disc has been done well, except that the pitch is about a half tone high because the original was not revolving at the correct speed while the dubbing was being made. On machines with adjustable speed motors, this fault can be

corrected easily, but it is annoying nevertheless.

The *Largo al factotum* has been recorded by practically every operatic baritone who ever sang for the phonograph and while the melodious *A tanto amor* is seldom heard nowadays there are some magnificent performances of it on acoustic discs by such illustrious artists as Renaud, Battistini, Ancona and Zanelli. I cannot say that Sammarco's performances surpass my own favorite recordings of these arias, but they are well sung and are especially recommended to those who have not had previously an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the singing of this distinguished baritone.

PUCCHINI: *Manon Lescaut*—*In quelle trine morbide*; and ROSSINI: *Guglielmo Tell*—*Selva opaca*; sung by Rosa Ponselle. CRS 10-inch disc No. 15, Price \$2.00.

▲ In the early 1920's Ponselle's soprano was at its opulent and matchless best, though her interpretive gifts perhaps had still to attain their peak. By then, the acoustic method of recording had reached a point where it could capture the human voice with admirable fidelity. In fact, I feel that some of Ponselle's Columbia and Victor discs of this period reproduce her voice with a greater fullness and clarity of tone than do her first electrical recordings which soon followed. Be that as it may, the singer never re-made either of these beautiful and unhackneyed arias electrically and, whatever their prejudices against acoustic recordings, Ponselle fans have always been eager to acquire the original Columbia discs from which these dubbings were taken. Both arias are gloriously sung. (The original of *Selva opaca* was number 98058. For this edition, the first of Ponselle's two recordings of *In quelle trine morbide* was used; the second version appeared later on a double-faced disc (2014-M) with the then new silent surface; it has a short bit of recitative missing from the earlier one.)

VERDI: *Aida*—*O cieli azzurri*; and PUCCHINI: *La Tosca*—*Vissi d'arte*; sung by Emmy Destinn (soprano). CRS 10-inch disc No. 16, price \$2.00.

▲ One wonders what kind of reception this re-issue of Columbia A5587 will receive. In

its original form, it appeared a great many years ago and remained on sale for a long time. Today, while not a common disc it is by no means a true rarity. Since it is presumed most dyed-in-the-wool collectors already have this record, the question arises: are there enough new-comers to the field to give this edition sufficient support?

While not being one of Destinn's best records, this one can certainly be classified as one of her good ones. It represents her in two of her most famous roles. To those who remember the vital, vibrant sound of Destinn's voice, so individual in its timbre, these recordings might seem like rather veiled echoes of her singing as it actually sounded in the opera house years ago. Nevertheless, they must convey some of essential quality for they are treasured by many who heard her in person. Never having had that privilege myself, I cannot express an opinion as to the faithfulness of the reproductions. One thing I should like to know is whether Destinn in the opera house prolonged the pianissimo high A at the end of *O cieli azzurri* to the same length that she did when she made this record, far from the admonishing eye of a conductor like Toscanini. It is a tradition to hold this note, of course, but in this case some think Destinn over did it a bit. I would be interested to know *how* that note sounded in real life, for, as recorded, it is a curiously still tone without real vibrancy. Since Destinn's voice was noted for its vibrancy, I suspect the reproduction is to blame. The old recording horn caused a tonal rigidity in a great many famous voices of the past and a sort of "hooting" quality of which some collectors complain. As far as this disc is concerned, one imperfectly recorded note should not deter the prospective purchaser; the record is worth owning.

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#### A Note on Antonio Paoli

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▲ Information on singers, especially those who sang little or not at all in this country, is often difficult to obtain without extensive research beyond the convenient bounds of the standard reference books which concern themselves with biographical data of this sort and which are, incidentally, all more or

(Continued on page 93)



## RECORD NOTES AND R E V I E W S

*It is the purpose of this department to review monthly all worthwhile recordings. If at any time we happen to omit a record in which the reader is particularly interested, we shall be glad to give our opinion of the recording on written request. Correspondents are requested to enclose self-addressed stamped envelopes.*

*We believe that record buyers would do well to order by title rather than by number such items as they may wish to purchase. Numbers are sometimes printed incorrectly in our sources.*

*All prices given are without tax.*

### Orchestra

GLAZOUNOFF: *The Seasons* (Ballet Suite), Opus 67; played by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, direction of Anton Dorati. Victor set M or DM-1072, four discs, price \$4.50.

▲It must be said at the outset that the Dallas Symphony, one of America's youngest orchestras, shows up here in a most favorable manner. There is a spontaneity and liveness to the playing, which, of course, is traceable to the work of Mr. Dorati, who formed and trained the organization. To be sure, Mr. Dorati is on familiar territory in ballet music, for he has been long associated with ballet companies. Yet, recalling some previous work he has accomplished on records with the Ballet Theatre Orchestra, the quality of the playing here is far advanced and must be regarded as traceable to better rehearsals and preparation of this score. It will be interesting to hear this orchestra and its able director in music of a more sober type—we understand that they recorded with Mr. Menuhin the *Violin Concerto* of Bartok among other works. The quality of the recording here is also good; there is a fine tonal realism and a welcome hall resonance which gives the reproduction a needed liveness.

The comments of the English critic, Edward Sackville West, anent ballet music in last month's issue is recalled listening to this music. His contention that ballet music is not intended to be self-subsistent and "is apt to sound thin and tedious after a few playings" is borne out here. Glazounoff's ballet, *The Seasons*, although first produced in 1900, is music looking back to Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakoff, and today seems badly dated. In a complete performance via records this score proves tiresome and overlong. The opening section, *A Winter Landscape*, has its admirable moments—its musical snowstorm is well contrived. The second section, *Spring*, is completely banal. And *Summer* is too sentimental for its own good. The *Autumn Bacchanale* has long been the most admired section of this work. I can remember the renowned Pavlova in this scene. This is effective music, with a great deal more life and variety. At best, *The Seasons* is utility music, best suited to the ballet theatre. —P.H.R.

MILHAUD: *Suite Francaise*; played by the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York, direction of Darius Milhaud. Columbia set X- or MX-268, two discs, price \$3.00.

▲Milhaud wrote this work originally for performance of high school bands. He contends that it is neither melodically or rhythmically difficult to play. Perhaps not, but I doubt that any high school band or orchestra could give it a performance comparable to the present one. The composer conducts with fine feeling and considerable energy and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra does justice to his direction. And reproductively the occasion has been equally well taken care of.

In November 1943, Victor brought out a performance by Golschmann and the St. Louis Symphony (set 951) of Milhaud's *Suite Provencale*, a work of a similar genre. In both compositions, the composer has taken a group of folk tunes of his native France and mixed them with tune of his own origin. There are some attractive melodies here, as indeed there were in the other score. It seemed to me in the *Suite Provencale* that the material was inflated in its modern orchestral dress. Perhaps some might

feel this is true of the present suite, but here I am inclined to accept Milhaud on his own terms. Being unfamiliar with the folk tunes themselves I have no predisposed thoughts about them and I find what Milhaud has done quite diverting. There are five sections to this work, each named after a province from which the folk tunes were derived. The material is nicely contrasted and the whole thing shows the ingenuity of a fertile musical mind. By and large this sort of thing remains music of occasion, it has no formal structure to fascinate the listener and hold his attention, rather there is certain freedom of spirit and carefreeness which in itself has its place in music. If one likes the melodies, one does not usually stop to think how long will such a work endure, one accepts it for what it has and enjoys it when the mood asserts itself. —P.H.R.

TRADITIONAL: *Londonderry Air*; and DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5—Largo*; played by Sigmund Romberg and His Orchestra. Victor disc 11-9223, price \$1.00.

▲It would be hard to classify this disc. The performances of the competent orchestra under the direction of the popular Mr. Romberg lie somewhere between the salon and the concert hall. The Dvorak, needless to say, has been arranged and abbreviated, and the indestructible Irish melody has been subjected to a fertile imagination. The bagpipe effect in the second stanza may quite possibly have been inspired by the familiar text which Mr. Weatherly set to the old tune, but it seems to add a touch of the Scotch (at first hearing you might think it Oriental) which is certainly unexpected and novel. The recording, mechanically speaking, is very good. —P.L.M.

WEILL: *Four Excerpts from the Three-Penny Opera (Dreigroschenoper)*; played by the Berlin Opera Orchestra, conducted by Otto Klemperer. Polydor 10-inch discs 24172/73, issued by Vox.

▲Vox has made an arrangement to re-release in this country a group of Polydor recordings, made in both France and Germany. The first of these to reach our attention brings us the above excerpts from Weill's

satirical and jazzy opera, which took the world by storm in the 1920s. In its time, it achieved tremendous success, but soon became a "dated" product like so many other works of the "Twaddling Twenties". What Mr. Weill's aim in his operatic opus was to satirize the ragtime and jazz movement of his day. I think these discs were made sometime in the early 1930s. There was also a group of vocal excerpts from this opera once available on Ultraphone, made in the late 1920s, which was highly overrated by a modern-minded group of record buyers. The present selections were always preferable in my estimation; they give us a good impression of what Weill was attempting in his score—wit, satire, drollery—a sort of commentary on jazz music in those days. The orchestral ensemble is made up of brass and woodwinds, and it shows how skillful the composer was in the early part of his career at this sort of thing. The music has been called vulgar and trite on occasion, but it has also been praised for not being boring. Mr. Klemperer plays it with zest. The recording is not up to present-day realism, but is still satisfactory. I think a lot of people will get a kick out of these records; in their way, they are a bit of fun, arousing memories of a decade of many musical curiosities.

—P.H.R.

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### Concerto

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MOZART: *Concerto in E flat for two pianos*, K. 365; played by Vronsky and Babin (duo-pianists) and Robin Hood Dell Orchestra, direction Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia set M or MM-628, three discs, price \$3.85.

▲ It was early in 1941 that the last version of this lovely concerto was released. José and Amparo Iturbi were the pianists; previously there had been a set by Karl and Artur Schnabel. Apparently this is the very first time that Columbia has gotten around to recording it. In view of recent years' two-piano activities this is surprising, since the concerto is the most popular in the repertoire, and deservedly so.

Unfortunately, this version leaves much to be desired. From a mechanical viewpoint, the balance is bad. It sounds as though the microphones had been set directly over the pianos; when they and the orchestra play together, the strings are relegated to a discreet murmur in the background. There is a coarse, muffled quality, and more than a suggestion of overmonitoring, since the dynamic levels are different in various sections.

Vronsky and Babin are one of the ablest two-piano combinations before the public, but their style is not Mozartean. Although their integration is flawless, they seem to pick at the music rather than dig into it. One misses the nuance, the shading, the delicate dynamic adjustment that the concerto demands. Force is a poor substitute for vigor; Vronsky and Babin continually overstress, missing the point because they make too much of it. As for the accompaniment of Mitropoulos, it is a bit rigid and handicapped by what sounds to be an over-large orchestra.

Of the two previous sets, that of the Iturbis was overamplified and strident; that of the Schnabels an inferior recording (mechanically) and a pedantic performance. We still need, therefore, a sparkling, intimate version of this concerto. —H.C.S.

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### IMPORTANT CORRECTION THE RECORD HUNTER

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## Chamber Music

**BRAHMS:** *Sonata in E flat major, Opus 120, No. 2*; played by Benny Goodman (clarinet) and Nadia Reisenberg (piano). Columbia set M or MM-629, three discs, price \$3.85.

▲ How many admirers of Benny Goodman's jazz playing will go for this sonata may be a moot question, but I feel a lot of people who do not like jazz and favor chamber music will welcome the fact that Mr. Goodman has seen fit to record a work of this kind. It is known that he devotes considerable time and study to classical compositions and we already have on records his performance of the *Clarinet Quintet* by Mozart (Victor set 452). Goodman is more than a capable musician, he is one of the most gifted performers on his chosen instrument of our times. However, his long association with jazz does not permit him, in my estimation, to make the transition from one school to the other in a completely satisfactory manner. It cannot be said that his playing here is lacking in artistic intent, but one feels at times that it wants expressive freedom. Thus, at the opening of the second movement there is not quite the freedom of flow which the music demands and certainly little of the *appassionato* feeling which Brahms has indicated. The finale in part is also lacking in an essential rhythmic freedom and Mr. Goodman's tone here is often dull and not sufficiently mellow. The English clarinetist, Frederick Thurston recorded this work for English Decca, and his performance reveals a greater variety of rhythmic and tonal feeling. Yet, the merits of Mr. Goodman's performance are not to be lightly dismissed. I find much of his playing in the lower register more mellow and full than Thurston's and there are many moments revealing a truly affectionate feeling for Brahms' melodies. Miss Reisenberg is an understanding partner, and on her own proves herself to be a fine Brahmsian. Reproductively the work is well balanced and tonally realistic.

For those who are unfamiliar with this sonata, the last of Brahms' fine chamber compositions, let me say it has long been deservedly a favorite with musicians and with the public. Its reflective poetic qualities are

irresistible; its thematic material is songful and of the kind which distinguishes the last period of Brahms' work. In this sonata and in the one in *F minor, Opus 120, No. 1*, Brahms seems to have ruminated on his long and full creative career, for both works are of a contemplative character. In the opening movement of the present work the mood recalls that of the first sonata, *Opus 78*, and in the third variation of the finale we are reminded of the *Intermezzo in B flat minor* from *Opus 117*.

It has always been a controversial point whether the sonatas of *Opus 120* are better when performed by the clarinet or the viola. I lean towards the latter instrument and strongly feel impelled to recommend the listener to make comparisons between the performances of Goodman and Reisenberg and of Primrose and Gerald Moore (Victor set 422). Undoubtedly, Brahms phrase-forms are more characteristic of the wind instrument, but the viola keeps alive much thematic material which sounds somewhat dull and colorless on the clarinet, an example of this is to be noted in the first half of the last movement. And this is no criticism of Mr. Goodman, for Thurston is equally dull in his statement of the theme. The ardent chamber music listener will probably share my viewpoint that there is room for both types of performance in one's record collection. —P.H.R.

**PROKOFIEFF:** *Quartet No. 2 in F major, Opus 92*; played by the Gordon String Quartet. Concert Hall Society set No. 1, three discs. Available on subscription only (see Editorial Notes).

▲ The quality of the recording is unusually fine with exceptional high frequencies which give the reproduction a clarity and brightness that is all to the good. The vinylite surfaces, like those of RCA-Victor, are without surface sound and leave one with the impression of listening to a high-fidelity broadcast rather than a recording.

This quartet was written in 1942 and belongs among the composer's so-called Russian compositions. Its alliance with Russia is further heightened by Prokofiev's use of Kabardinian and Balkarian themes, which one suspects were chosen for their rhythmic and lyrical contrasts. The work is written

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in classical form and so becomes, as the annotator, Mr. List, remarks an example of "new wine in old bottles". There is a divergence of intent and purpose in Prokofiev's two string quartets, the first written in this country in 1930 was based on original themes and is a deeper and more erudite score. The second, based on folk themes, is more accessible to the general listener. There will always be some cavil among musicians as to the value of folk melodies in art music, and more especially in the string quartet form. The present score, however, can not be dismissed on the quality or appeal of its thematic material, for Prokofiev's ingenuity and extraordinary musicianship are apparent on every page. There are those who feel that his *Sonata in D major, Opus 94*, which Szigeti recently recorded, is thematically uninspired. Undeniably, the sonata and this quartet utilize thematic material which has an immediate appeal, and in both cases their worth is found in what the composer does with the material rather than in its intrinsic value.

There is an alliance between this quartet and the *Overture on Hebrew Themes*, which Disc recently brought out in a recording, since both works utilize folk themes and both reveal the ingenuity of the composer in the handling of such material. One feels, as his biographer Israel Nestyev says, that "the national themes are not merely 'adapted' by the composer; 'they are forced to surrender completely to his commanding creative personality'. The first movement here is full of dramatic strength, like its parallel in the *First Quartet* it begins with a surging uplift. Here again the composer has chosen material for consistent contrast and potential elaboration. There is a characteristic austerity in the treatment of the themes, but this only strengthens their appeal. The second movement, based in part on a Caucasian love song, is a threnody of poetic strength and beauty. The finale makes good use of dance rhythms and contrasts some highly effective lyrical writing with an ironic, dissonant type of work characteristic of the composer.

The performance of the Gordon String Quartet is wholly admirable. This organization, neglected on records, has long been one of my favorite quartets; I have heard it give some of the best readings of Beethoven

quartets and of modern works that I can remember in the concert hall. Not only is the playing here alert and very much alive from the rhythmic side of the picture but it reveals a truly sympathetic feeling for the expressive qualities of the score. —P.H.R.

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## Keyboard

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BACH: *Three Part Inventions*; played by Erno Balogh (piano). DISC set 770, three discs, price \$4.50.

▲ In April 1945, Asch brought out Mr. Balogh's performance of the *Two Part Inventions* of Bach (set 102). Those who admired that earlier album, among whom I include myself, will be gratified to find that the pianist has turned to the more elaborate and, in my estimation, more rewarding *Three Part Inventions*. Bach wrote these works for the clavichord, as keyboard studies for his sons and other students. They reveal Bach's feelings and views about education, as Parry has said, and they show "how he instinctively felt the advantage of developing the musical intelligence simultaneously with the technique, instead of stupefying the learner with meaningless mechanical exercises." For added information on these works I recommend the reader to the April 1945 issue of this magazine.

In these pieces Bach is not primarily concerned with melodies, but rather with thematic development. There is a distinction. But though he is working with recurring thematic material, in what Schweitzer terms "motival" use which allows for a natural development of the musical idea, Bach was not cut and dried in his polyphony as so many of his imitators became. Indeed, his themes are often charming melodies and their usage is both logical and cogent. In designating these pieces for performance on the clavichord, Bach had in mind the best possible medium for exploiting their "cantabile style". The modern piano does not allow for quite the same "singing line", yet it can provide a happy semblance of it as Mr. Balogh proves both here and in his performance of the *Two Part Inventions*. I have heard these pieces performed with more digital dexterity with a view to accenting

all voices, but the effect was more percussive and in my mind alien to Bach's intentions. Balogh preserves an intimacy of style and aims always for a singing line. His technique is good, but it is not the prime motive of his performance. He succeeds in making these little works an enjoyable experience for the listener. The quality of the recording is good and in keeping, I feel certain, with Balogh's aims, for it too possesses an intimacy of mood.

—P.H.R.

CHOPIN: *Etudes in E, C sharp minor, G flat and C minor (Op. 10, Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 12); Nocturnes in E flat and F sharp (Op. 9, No. 2, and Op. 15, No. 2); Polonaise Militaire (Op. 40, No. 1); Berceuse (Op. 57); Waltzes in C sharp minor and G flat (Op. 64, No. 2, and Op. 70, No. 1);* played by Oscar Levant. Columbia set M-649, four discs, price \$4.85.

▲ I don't know what to say about this set. Among the notes I have jotted down while going through it are: "labored, erratic rhythms, hop-skip-jump of a rubato, insufficient technique, overpedalling, jerkiness. . . Did he practice? . . . little feeling. . ." There is little point discussing the set from a mechanical or interpretive view, and it calls for a few comments of an extra-musical nature.

Why did Columbia release it? Of all composers today, Chopin seems the most popular. Record dealers complain that they cannot keep any of his works in stock. The point is that any album of Chopin would

sell—so why didn't Columbia at least get a more secure pianist to make it? Levant has a following; he could have drawn upon music more fitting for his interesting talents and done justice both to his public and himself. Here the result is unfortunate all the way around. From any aspect—artistic, pecuniary, or publicity—I just can't see why this album was put on the market.

—H.C.S.

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## Voice

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BELLINI: *Norma—Casta Diva*; and PONCHIELLI: *La Gioconda—Suicidio!*; sung by Zinka Milanov (soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra and Chorus, direction of Frieder Wiessmann. Victor disc 11-9293, price \$1.00.

▲ The first records which Mme. Milanov made for Victor about a year ago led us to expect fine things of her. Hers is one of the most beautiful voices in the world today—so far as I know the loveliest of its particular type. The unevenness of her singing which in the past has dampened so much of the enthusiasm which her voice has aroused has to some extent been overcome in recent seasons, and she has given great pleasure with her Donna Anna and her Norma as well as her Aida, her Gioconda and her Leonora in *La Forza del Destino*. Unfortunately the present record is a retrogression,

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the more regrettable because it shows not only her unfortunate habit of pushing certain tones to unsteadiness and faulty intonation but her quite ravishing *pianissimo*, her dramatic power and the rich beauty of her chest tones. She has sung these arias well in the opera house—I have heard her do the *Suicidio* magnificently—and she should have made a better record of them.

Of the *Costa Diva* she gives us the preceding *recitative* (none too firmly sung) and only one stanza of the *cavatina*—duplicating the first side of the classic Ponselle disc (Victor 8125) which would be definitive if the recording were adequate. Happily there is a good chorus here to provide the appropriate background. Milanov's *Suicidio* sent me on an excursion into older versions of the aria, which increased my admiration for Rosa Raisa's 1934 recording (IRCC 203). Though the voice was past its prime her singing had style and drama, and the balance with the orchestra was unusually good. If Rosa Ponselle had recorded this aria electrically, however, she would probably have carried off the honors, to judge by her acoustic version. I wish Mme. Milanov would try it again under as auspicious a recording setup as Dr. Weissmann's orchestra and Victor's engineers have here provided. I am sure she could improve on this effort.

—P.L.M.

HERBERT: *Mademoiselle Modiste*—*Kiss Me Again*; *The Red Mill*—*Moonbeams*; *Indian Summer*; *Naughty Marietta*—*'Neath the Southern Moon*; *Orange Blossoms*—*A Kiss in the Dark*; *The Fortune Teller*—*Romany Life*; sung by Dorothy Kirsten (soprano) with Orchestra and Chorus, direction of Russ Case. Victor M-1069, three discs, \$4.00.

▲ Miss Kirsten was hailed last season as one of the most satisfactory of the younger singers at the Metropolitan. But so far collectors of records have had no opportunity to study her art as applied to any very serious music. This, I understand, is according to the singer's own desires, for she is conscientious enough to want to await her full artistic maturity before commencing work on the permanent memorial which records provide for an artist. Of her singing in more

popular types of music it may be said that she is infinitely superior to most of her rivals in the field. The voice quality is even and appealing, and her execution is neat and well controlled. If she misses true distinction here this may be due to some extent at least to the over-amplification of the voice, though certainly the Radio City orchestrations also contribute. The songs themselves will not be novel to many listeners; most of them belong among the best melodies of their composer. I never cease to wonder just how much of a conscious tribute Herbert intended to pay to Johann Strauss, Jr. in the verses leading up to the famous melody of *Kiss Me Again*, so like a song in *Die Fledermaus* both in their content and in their musical expression. *Romany Life* has come to me for review twice before in the last few months, but neither time in so satisfactory a version as the present. Miss Kirsten has the necessary brilliance for this as well as the *legato* lyricism required for *Kiss Me Again*.

—P.L.M.

MASSENET: *Hérodiade*—*Vision fugitive*; and THOMAS: *Hamlet*—*Chanson Bachique*; sung by Robert Merrill (baritone) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Jean Paul Morel. Victor disc 11-9291, price \$1.00.

▲ After an impressive record debut Mr. Merrill here lets us down with a not too successful attempt to cope with the problems of French language and musical style. *Vision fugitive* is inevitable in the repertoire of every baritone either in opera or on the concert stage, and it comes off here rather better than the *Hamlet* piece. This *Drinking Song* requires a lot of voice, and this Mr. Merrill supplies, but it also needs a vitality which is quite lacking in his performance. *Hamlet* is supposed to be urging the players to drink, and, full of his own plot to trap his uncle, he sings in a spirit of reckless abandon. This reaches its climax in the brilliant *cadenza* which leads us back into the principal melody. Mr. Merrill, adopting too slow a tempo, gives us the notes, but not much more. The singer is young and his possibilities are practically unlimited. Certainly we can expect better things of him.

—P.L.M.

MEYERBEER: *L'Africana*—*O Paradiso!*; and VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Ma se m'è forza perdeti*; sung by Jan Peerce (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann. Victor disc 11-9295, price \$1.00.

▲ Listening to this latest of *O Paradiso's* I am inclined to accept it as the best available, although I have not taken the time to make comparisons. If the Peerce voice is hardly so sensuous in tone nor so clear-cut in line as those of the best Italians, it is certainly more than adequate to the demands of the music, and he is beyond question more musical and stylistically cleaner than the usual run of operatic tenors. His one serious rival in this type of thing would seem to be Bjorling, but I do not recall in the latter's version any such expansiveness of recording or so good a balance with the orchestra as we have here. The *Ballo in Maschera* air reaches the American lists for the first time, if memory serves, since the old acoustic of Caruso. Not an outstanding example, it nevertheless shows the familiar skill and style of the composer and makes a welcome change from its more familiar prototypes. Peerce sings it with distinction if hardly with the prodigality occasioned by the Meyerbeer number. —P.L.M.

PARIS: *April in Paris* (from *Walk a Little Faster*) (Duke); *J'Attendrai* (Poterat); *La Marseillaise* (Rouget de Lisle); *Chanson de Marie Antoinette* (Jacobson); *Sylvia*—*Pizzicato Ballerina* (Delibes, arr. L.A. Forge); *Parlez-Moi d'Amour* (Lenoir); *La Traviata*—*Ah! fors' è lui* (Verdi); sung by Lily Pons (soprano) with orchestra, direction of Andre Kostelanetz. Columbia M- or MM-638, three discs, price \$4.05.

▲ The simple name of Paris offers the occasion for this greatly assorted program—indeed it would be difficult to think of any other excuse from bringing together these particular bedfellows. And as the program is miscellaneous, so, I fear, is the singing, for it ranges from some of the soprano's more effective moments to some in which she seems not quite comfortable. But, to take things in their order: Miss Pons is really not the person to bring the best out of such a

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song as Vernon Duke's *April in Paris*. Whether because the English language is still less congenial to her than her native French, or because she has not mastered the idiom of popular song, her tone is thin and rather monotonous here and her singing lacks rhythmic shape. As soon as she comes to *J'Attendrai*, however, something happens, for here is charming lyric singing and all the familiar appeal of the Pons tone. *La Marseillaise*, as she presents it, cannot fail to arrest the attention, for the soprano somehow manages to put a great deal of spirit into her performance and at the same time to maintain a floating and almost disembodied tone. Tricks of the microphone, no doubt, yet highly effective.

The *Chanson de Marie Antoinette* is nicely done, but I prefer her Victor recording of several years back in which the rather too fancy accompaniment was played more properly on the piano. Mr. La Forge's arrangement of the *Pizzicato* from *Sylvia* is a pure and simple showpiece and not to be taken seriously as music. *Parles-Moi d'Amour* is rather slow and careful, quite lacking in the insinuation with which Lucienne Boyer infuses her recording of it (Columbia 205M). Finally, Miss Pons seems ill at ease in the *Traviata* aria. To the best of my knowledge Violetta is not one of the lady's roles, though it seems almost inevitable in the nature of things that she should have had occasion to sing this celebrated selection from it. The *recitative* is fluttery and lacking in incisiveness, and there is no impression of ecstasy in the melody of *Ah, quell' amor*.

On the whole, then, the soprano has shown to better advantage in other sets of records, and I suspect that this one has been aimed at too great a diversity of tastes to appeal very strongly to any but her most devoted admirers. Mr. Kostelanetz provides the orchestral backgrounds in his customary lavish manner, and the recording is satisfactory. —P.L.M.

**RUSSIAN OPERA ARIAS:** *Eugen Onegin*—*Prince Gremin's Air* (Tchaikovsky); *Sadko*—*Song of the Viking Guest* (Rimski-Korsakov); *Prince Igor*—*Prince Galitsky's Air* (Borodin); *Boris Godunov*—*Come now, Comrades, Fill up your Glass* (Moussorgsky); *The Roussalka*—*Miller's Aria* (Dar-

gomizsky); *Song of the Flea* (Moussorgsky); sung by Alexander Kipnis, (basso) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Nicholas Berezowsky, assisted by Anna Leskaya (soprano) and Ilya Tamarin, tenor, in the *Boris* selection. Victor set M-1073, three discs, price \$3.85.

▲ Mr. Kipnis, of all the singers practising today, would seem to be the one entitled to claim the mantle of the great Chaliapin. And this album of Russian airs can hardly fail to recall the art of that towering singing-actor to those of us who have been familiar with his art. Of the six selections four were recorded by Chaliapin; in fact they have always been associated in the minds of many of us with his interpretive genius. Because of this I may as well begin this review with a general comparison of the two singers, for what may be said of one selection will usually apply to the others. I suppose it is undeniable that for sheer tonal magnificance the palm must go to Kipnis. His is one of the biggest and most glorious basses within memory, but I think that in this very strength lies his weakness. One feels a good deal of the time that because of the glory of the instrument the artist is not quite at his ease in controlling it, and in consequence he is often guilty (though to a far lesser degree in Russian music than in German) of mouthing his words unduly, probably in an honest effort at dramatic diction. It was this fact first of all that struck me as I listened to these arias first as sung by Chaliapin and then by Kipnis.

Then there is the matter of temperament and personality. Chaliapin belonged to the elect among singing actors, and he was able to project his characterizations onto the wax, so that all of his best discs are in their own way little dramas. It is hardly fair to blame Kipnis if he lacks this extraordinary power, but because he lacks it he does not rival, though he may succeed, Chaliapin. Those who have the older records will not want to give them up, despite the obvious mechanical superiority of the new. For the reproduction here is very fine indeed, though the voice because of its very bigness is a difficult one to keep in balance with the orchestra.

The *Eugen Onegin* aria is not one that Chaliapin recorded, and for that reason the Kipnis version is doubly welcome. So far as I know this is the first really adequate record-

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ing of this appealing music, and in it Kipnis is at his very best. His singing has both poise and dignity to a remarkable degree. The *Song of the Viking Guest* is most effective when we remember its setting in the opera of *Sadko* where it is one of the songs sung by natives of very different countries in praise of their homelands. Thus it stands in impressive contrast to the only too well known *Song of India*. As the Hindu describes the wealth and fascination of the Orient, the Viking describes the sturdy North.

*Galitsky's Air* is a rowdy affair, sung here with perhaps greater openness than it was by Chaliapin. The *Boris Godunov* selection is valuable as the first recording of the scene following Varlaam's famous song of the siege of Kazan (included in the Kipnis *Boris* album) and it brings us the competent singing of the two assisting artists. It is, however, a fragment, and ends in mid air. The *Miller's Song* is a very catchy tune and should be popular wherever it is heard. How the *Song of the Flea* got into an opera set is a moot question, but it is easy to understand why the singer chose to do it. For my taste his version is a bit too strong, even passing the suggestiveness of the last Chaliapin recording (Victor 14901) made in Tokio in 1936.

The orchestra is well in hand under Mr. Berezowsky's direction, and the recording is consistently good. —P.L.M.

STRAUSS: *Ständchen*, Op. 17, No. 2; *Morgen*, Op. 27, No. 4; *Allerseelen*, Op. 10, No. 8; *Zueignung*, Op. 10, No. 1; sung by Lotte Lehmann (soprano) with piano accompaniments by Paul Ulanowsky. Victor 10-inch set X-270, two discs, price \$2.37.

▲ With so many beautiful songs unrecorded or unavailable, indeed with so many lovely Strauss songs unknown to any but the specialist, it seems unfortunate that Mme. Lehmann should have selected the four most popular *lieder* of this composer to do him honor in her latest album. The fact that two of the four were once available on recordings by the lady herself seems less important since these Decca discs are no longer on the American market. Having said this, it would be a pleasure to be able to add that in any case the singer here appears at her best, but this is unhappily not so. As in so many modern recordings the

microphone has been so placed as to favor the singer at the expense of her excellent accompanist, and this in Strauss songs is particularly unfortunate. Nor is the recorded piano tone either natural or especially beautiful.

My conclusion is, therefore, that those of Mme. Lehmann's admirers who wish to study her phrasing or interpretation may find something here to interest them, but those who are looking for recordings of the songs will find them all more successfully conveyed to discs by other singers.—P.L.M.

A TREASURY OF GRAND OPERA: *Lohengrin—Prelude, Act I* (Wagner); played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra, direction of Arturo Toscanini; *Pagliacci—Si può?* (Leoncavallo); sung by Leonard Warren, (baritone) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann; *Aida—Ritorna Vincitori!* (Verdi); sung by Zinka Milanov (soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann; *Faust—Deposons les armes* (Gounod); sung by the RCA Victor Chorale and Orchestra, direction of Robert Shaw; *Carmen—Habanera* (Bizet); sung by Gladys Swarthout, (mezzo-soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Erich Leinsdorf; *La Traviata—Un di felice eterea* (Verdi); sung by Licia Albanese (soprano) and Jan Peerce (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann; *Don Giovanni—Il mio tesoro* (Mozart); sung by James Melton, (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Paul Breisach. Victor M-1074, four discs, price \$5.00.

▲ This bargain-counter selection has been designed as a companion-piece to the new Simon and Schuster anthology of the same title. Some of the selections, if I mistake not, are drawn from earlier releases, and one side is extracted from the still awaited *Carmen* album, but most are new and apparently otherwise unattached.

Toscanini's *Lohengrin Prelude* is a thing of shimmering loveliness, already too well known to call for extended comment here. Mr. Warren compresses the *Pagliacci Prologue* into one side of a disc, as used so often to be done in the old acoustic days. His performance is a highly creditable one. Mme.

Milanov's *Ritorna Vincitor!* is "oh, so all but!" The conception is effectively dramatic and the singing lovely when the voice is not pushed. I think Gounod would be pleased with the rousing account Mr. Shaw and his Chorale give of the old familiar *Soldiers' Chorus*. We may smile as we remember that it was this selection which stopped the show when *Faust* was first performed, but somehow right now I can understand that. Both here and in the *Habanera*, in which they provide a background for Miss Swarthout, these excellent singers give us a model of choral diction. Miss Swarthout herself sings with her customary tonal charm and with good diction and musical line, only occasionally overstressing a word to no apparent dramatic gain. This version is an enormous improvement over her earlier recording of this music (Victor 14419).

The *Traviata* duet is the least satisfactory recording in the set: here for once the voices are seriously over-amplified and at the same time a bit clumsy in their florid singing. Mr. Melton's *Il mio tesoro* is probably about as good as any recording of this air made in recent years with the surprising exception of Tauber's (Parlophone R 20444). His phrasing is considerably better than most' although he loses a little time here and there before the long passages.

A final word should be said in praise of the excellent reproduction in the bulk of these recordings. Dr. Weissmann, with his long experience as a phonograph conductor, is responsible for the good playing of the accompanying orchestra, and he has certainly had fine cooperation from the technicians who controlled the balance with the voices. As noted above this success has not been quite one hundred per cent, but the average is impressively high. —P.L.M.

VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Eri tu?*; and *Otello*—*Credo in un Dio crudel*; sung by Leonard Warren (baritone) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann. Victor disc 11-9292, price \$1.00.

▲Of all the records of Mr. Warren which have come my way this is quite possibly the best. Gifted with a generous voice and a generally pleasing production (despite a tendency to cloud some of his vowels) Mr.

Warren is a seasoned and dependable singer in the Italian opera tradition if not a vivid or impressive musical personality. His, therefore, is the kind of art which mellow with the years and will probably gain in richness if not in excitement. His *Eri tu?* is

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almost inevitably well done as it always is in the opera house. If he hasn't the vibrancy of Tibbett (Victor 7353) he is unquestionably better recorded. The same is true of his *Credo* as compared to Tibbett's (one of the few more or less satisfactory things in the Victor abridged *Otello*). For a subtler conception beautifully voiced I must refer my readers to Apollo Granforte's singing in Victor's complete *Otello* (Set M-152); but the performance there has been somewhat under- as Tibbett's has been over-recorded.

—P.L.M.

**WAGNER:** *Goetterdaemmerung—Erzaehlung*; sung by Blanche Thebom (mezzo-soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, direction of Frieder Weissmann. Victor disc 11-9296, price \$1.00.

▲ There may be room for question as the stability of Miss Thebom's rather light voice to this heavily dramatic music, but certainly her musicality, her intelligence and the beauty of her tone more than carry the day for her in this recording. This is Victor's third separate version of this scene, and it is a larger portion of the score than either of its predecessors. Schumann-Heink's performance remains one of the best mementos of the last years of a great singer (Victor 7107) but the scene is cut down to fit on one side of a disc and of course the recording shows its age. Thorborg included a two-sided version in her *Wagnerian Characterizations* album (Victor 17222, in M-707) but she cut off the passage with which Miss Thebom ends. The Swedish contralto, always a dependable artist, gave a good dramatic account of the music, but her voice was over-recorded. In this respect the new series of Victor opera discs, of which this is one, marks a tremendous advance over the products of a few years ago. A salute to Dr. Weissmann is decidedly in order while we compliment Miss Thebom.

—P.L.M.

**WAGNER:** *Lohengrin—Bridal Chorus*; and **VERDI:** *Il Trovatore—Anvil Chorus*; sung by the RCA-Victor Chorale and Orchestra, direction of Robert Shaw. Victor disc 11-9294, price \$1.00.

▲ Here are two of the most famous of operatic choruses sung with more spirit and

imagination than is usual in the opera house and with a clarity of diction which is little short of a revelation. Like the bulk of the current Victor release of operatic recordings this disc is distinguished by a fine spaciousness and a balance between chorus and orchestra which has been all too rare up to the present time. Thanks to the fine work of Mr. Shaw and his Chorale, I was struck for the first time in my life by the naive, perhaps, but expressive way in which Verdi has set certain of the words—notably the line beginning *Oh guarda, guarda!* with its sunrise effect.

On the debit side there is some scrambling in the harp section in the *Lohengrin* piece, and in the unaccompanied passages the intonation is not quite perfect, though in this kind of music it would be something of a miracle if it were. But anyone susceptible to a thrill of pleasure from an old warhorse will find it in the *Anvil Chorus*.

—P.L.M.

**WAGNER:** *Die Meistersinger—Fliedermonolog; Wahnmonolog*; sung by Herbert Janssen (baritone) with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, direction of Paul Breisach. Columbia set X- or MX-269, two discs, price \$3.00.

▲ For a good many of us the voice of Friedrich Schorr will always be associated with the role of Hans Sachs, and anyone who essays the part must be measured by that not inconsiderable standard. Of the bass-baritones who have followed him at the Metropolitan none is more honorably entitled to be called Schorr's successor in the part than Herbert Janssen. The voice is lighter and somehow less noble, and the vocal style is not quite so mellow, yet Janssen has the essential dignity and expressive breadth which the part calls for.

The Schorr recordings of these two monologues (Victor 7425 and 7319) are nowadays not unnaturally showing their age, and it is high time someone replaced them. Fine as the singing is, they cannot hope to please the seeker after realism in reproduction. There are, furthermore, two blemishes in the *Wahnmonolog*, where the voice is pushed beyond tonal purity and pitch (some of this may actually be due to poor microphone placement, but the singer does sharp his note) which must cause regret though they do not spoil

our pleasure. No such charge can be brought against Janssen. He may never reach the heights of Schorr's interpretation, but he does maintain an even average. As for the recording, it is hardly necessary to say that it is vastly superior in the Janssen discs, for this reproduction meets contemporary standards. I doubt if any owners of the old recordings will discard them in favor of the new, but I can well imagine that many collectors will want to own both versions of this warm and human music. —P.L.M.

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terial identifying the material with the *Let's Pretend* broadcasts.

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These albums and the many others coming from the major companies are additional indications of the importance attached to records being made for children. They are rapidly reaching the mature stature which has been achieved by the makers of children's books. Let us hope that children's records will continue to improve in quantity and quality. There is no question of their value and their wide influence in the education of children in the home and in the school.

—Warren S. Freeman

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### Novelty

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**OLD MUSIC BOX MELODIES:** *Silent Night, Holy Night; O Sanctissima; Adeste Fideles; Ave Maria* (Bach-Gounod); *Three Operatic Airs; Three Old Waltz Melodies*. Album, three 10-inch discs, issued by Bornand Music Box Record Co., 333 Fifth Ave., Pelham 65, N.Y. Price \$5.25 (tax included).

▲ One of the most famous collections of rare old music boxes in this country is owned by Mr. A. V. Bornand. But he is not alone a collector, he is also one of the few remaining experts on the repair and construction of music boxes. His father before him was a famous Swiss manufacturer and expert on those popular home instruments in the days of our grandparents. It was the phonograph which relegated the music box to the attic beginning around 1900. By 1910, few of the old instruments remained in the family parlor. In recent times, about ten years ago to be exact, music boxes began to resume their place as works of art that could no longer be duplicated. That clear ringing tone of precision instruments made by master craftsmen years ago began to re-charm the musical listeners of today, just as they had charmed the listeners of the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Mr. Bornand, the manufacture of the music box attained its height of per-

fection in Switzerland in the latter half of the 19th century; it was during this period that the larger and more elaborate type cylinder boxes were made, many of them with from two to ten interchangeable cylinders, and each cylinder playing from four to twelve selections of music. The disc type of music box came later; they were the actual forerunner of the first phonograph.

There is more than an old world charm in these recordings made from two of the finest boxes in the famous Bornand collection. The tone is clear and full, mellow and of a ringing quality. The first four selections were made from a disc box built in 1885 by the American branch of Regina, a well known German firm. The discs are fifteen and a half inches in width. The last two selections were taken from a cylinder box made in Geneva in 1875. The cylinders, interchangeable, are each eighteen inches in length. The quality of the tone from the disc box is unusually rich, that of the cylinder box a little more delicate with a more noticeable buoyancy. Both boxes are valuable instruments built by fine craftsmen, and the reproduction of these instruments is splendidly realized. I have heard the originals and was greatly fascinated with them. That fascination was not diminished by the recordings. A picture of the cylinder box appears on the cover of the album, its ornate carving and fine wood reaffirms the great importance that the music box assumed in the home in the old days.

The musical selections of the old music boxes generally embraced the most popular melodies of the times often decorated with tinkling runs and other harmonic embellishments. The Bornands have chosen a group of favorite Christmas songs and some special arrangements of operatic and old 19th-century waltz melodies for their first record album. It is not the intrinsic value of this music that engages the listener but the quaint, old world charm of its performance. Others, like myself, will remember music boxes that were in the family in our childhood. Maybe others, like myself, will recall their first acquaintance with certain tunes from a music box. I have played these recordings, some of the finest made from music boxes I have heard, to quite a number of people and all have expressed their fascination and interest in them.

—P.H.R.

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## Dr. Weissman Reminisces

(Continued from page 73)

dios. He is Victor's principal opera conductor. It is of interest to know that Dr. Weissmann is the appointed conductor of the newly reorganized New Jersey Symphony at Newark, an organization he expects to build into one of the leading orchestras of the country. He is also the conductor of the Scranton Philharmonic Orchestra. In time to come, he will undoubtedly be making recordings in his own right with one of his own orchestras. Perhaps he will then give us a recording of the Strauss' tone poem, *Macbeth*, of which he has spoken, as well as some other scores for which he has a fondness. He is said to have brought with him from Argentina an especial facility for conducting South American music, and he will probably wish to perform some of the scores which he grew to know and admire while in Buenos Aires.

(Next month Dr. Weissmann will tell us some experiences in the early days of his recording career and speak of artists with whom he was closely associated.)

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## Historic Record Reviews

(Continued from page 74)

less inadequate and frequently incorrect. Fortunately, an error published will often turn up more information than an hour's research. Last month I had occasion to mention the tenor Antonio Paoli. Such information as I gave concerning him was culled from an old record catalogue and it seems to have been incorrect. One friendly New York reader sent me some facts on the singer, but since then I have located the following authentic data.

Paoli was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1873. Since he was of Spanish parentage and studied at first in that country, it is not

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surprising that he was exploited as a singer of Spain. Apparently his vocal gifts were recognized in his boyhood, for in 1885 he went to Spain to begin his musical studies there. In 1895, he attracted the attention of Queen Maria Christina who sent him to Italy for voice training. He made his debut at Paris in 1899 in *William Tell*, and subsequently sang elsewhere on the continent as well as in Philadelphia and New York. After World War I he retired to San Juan and in 1939 he was pensioned by the Puerto Rican Government. He died on August 26, 1946.

## In The Popular Vein

By Ewzo Archetti

*T-Town Jump* and *The Kaycee Kid*; Geechie Smith and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Geechie Smith). Capitol 303.

● Accent on hot! Good for dancing if you can stand the pace. Musically, there are some good solo spots, especially on sax and trumpet. The voice: bold and brassy. Rhythm: solid.

*Intermission Riff* (Ray Wetzel) and *It's a Pity to Say Goodnight*; Stan Kenton and his Orchestra. Capitol 298.

● A riff—nothing more. But from this a good rhythm number is born. It rides on a solid bass and the solos are good, particularly sax and piano. The accent is hot. Other side: conventional dance music, a bit on the noisy side.

*If You Were There* and *This is the Night*; Andy Russell with orchestra conducted by Carl Kress. Capitol 291.

● Vocals, à la Sinatra, with orchestra. Skip it!

*Have I Told You Lately That I Love You* and *When You Leave Don't Slam the Door*; Tex Ritter and Cowboy Band. Capitol 296.

*Broken Vows* and *Shut That Gate*; Ted Daffan and his Texans. Columbia 37087.

● Westerns! A shade better than the usual.

*Either It's Love or It Isn't* and *Walking Away with My Heart*; The Pied Pipers with Paul Weston and his Orchestra. Capitol 306.

● If you like the Pied Pipers, you'll like this record. It's all theirs.

*The Things We Did Last Summer* and *You Keep Coming Back Like a Song*; Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and his Orchestra. Capitol 297.

*I'll Be with You in Apple Blossom Time*; Jo Stafford, with Nat King Cole, piano; Ray Linn, trumpet; Herbie Haymar, tenor sax; and orchestra conducted by Paul Weston. *This is Always*; Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and his Orchestra. Capitol 277.

*Cindy*; Jo Stafford, with soloists and orchestra as above. *I've Never Forgotten*; Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and his Orchestra. Capitol 259.

● Jo has built up quite a following with her radio programs. And no wonder. Her pleasantly smooth voice and style are romantic. They suggest, too, the beauty which is personally hers. These records are good examples of her art and they make very pleasant listening. *Cindy* and *I'll Be with You* are a bit different. They present a more vivacious Jo and contain a little extra something in the accompaniments.

*The Iggidy Song* and *Love On a Greyhound Bus*; The Dinning Sisters with Orchestra. Capitol 261.

*I Love My Love* and *And Then It's Heaven*; The Dinning Sisters with Orchestra conducted by Carl Kress. Capitol 281.

● Sounds like a new edition of the Andrew Sisters with a touch of humor. Very good!

*Begin the Beguine* (Cole Porter) and *Where is My Bess?* (from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*); Frank Sinatra with orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl. Columbia 37064.

*The Coffee Song* and *The Things We Did Last Summer*; Same voice, etc. Columbia 37089.

● If you want Sinatra, this is the genuine stuff. *Coffee Song* and *Things We Did* are in his usual vein but the Gershwin piece is definitely a new departure for him. This is Porgy's lament from the third act of *Porgy and Bess*, without chorus, and with a lighter orchestra than was intended. The result is surprisingly good. Frankie really sounds as if he meant it. Frankie with an operatic touch! Can this be a foretaste of things to come? *Begin the Beguine* is very well done—rhythmically and vocally. On the whole—an unusual record, worth having.

*I Knew I'd Fall in Love Tonight* and *All By Myself* (from Berlin's *Blue Skies*); Buddy Clark with Orchestra conducted by Mitchell Ayres. Columbia 37085.

● Pleasant listening. Berlin's melodic art helps quite a bit.

*I Feel So Good*; Big Bill, with piano, guitar, and washboard orchestra. *Tell Me Baby*; Big Bill and his Chicago Five. Columbia 37086.

● Blues with a feeling.

**Recommended for Dancing**

*I'm Learning to Speak English* (Rhumba) and *Palabras de Mujer* (Rhumba Guaracho); Carlos Molina and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Bobby Rivera). Capitol 307.

*Rose of the Alamo* and *The California Polka*; Tex Williams and his Western Caravan. Capitol 302.

*Everybody Kiss Your Sweetheart* and *The Whole World is Singing My Song*; Jack Smith, with Orchestra. Capitol 300.

*Without You* (from Disney's *Make Mine Music*) and *Rumors Are Flying*; Frankie Carle and his Orchestra. (Vocal by Marjorie Hughes). Columbia 37069.

*I Guess I'll Get the Papers* and *The Whole World is Singing My Song*; Les Brown and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Doris Day and Jack Haskell). Columbia 37066.

*Five O'Clock Shadow* (Lawrence) and *You Broke the Only Heart that Ever Loved You*; Elliot Lawrence and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Jack Lawrence and Rosalind Patton). Columbia 37084.

*On the Boardwalk in Atlantic City* and *I Wanna Know You Better Than I Do*; Freddy Martin and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Stuart Wade, Clyde Rogers, and the Martin Men). Victor 20-1984.

*So Would I* and *My Heart Goes Crazy* (both from *London Town*); Charlie Spivak and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Jimmy Saunders and The Stardreamers). Victor 20-1986.

*The Best Man* and *My Serenade*; Les Brown and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Butch Stone and Jack Haskell). Columbia 37086.

*Star Dust* (Carmichael) and *Sooner or Later* (from Disney's *Song of the South*); Billy Butterfield and his Orchestra (vocal by Pat O'Connor; trumpet solo by Billy Butterfield) Capitol 305.

● Shades of Bunny Berigan! If I didn't know better, I'd say Bunny was back with us again playing *Stardust*. Tone, technique, style are remarkably similar. Smooth as silk; just the right tempo! A gem of a record side. The other has many good points, too, including some more fine Butterfield-Berigan trumpet, some solid background work by the orchestra, and an engaging solo by Pat.

*Scufflin'* (Sam Donahue) and *Put That Kiss Back Where You Found It*; Sam Donahue and his Orchestra (vocal by Bill Lockwood). Capitol 293.

● The bobbysockers will just love *Scufflin'*: it's cut to order for acrobatic dancing. Musically, it is no great shakes and none of the solos is really outstanding. The other side is more conventional dance music.

*Carinosa* (Bolero) and *Carnival in Rio* (Samba), Desi Arnaz and his Orchestra (vocals by Elsa Miranda, Lucille Ball, and Desi Arnaz). Victor 25-1071.

● From the very first note you know this music is authentic—the rhythm, the playing, the singing. The bolero is good, as music, with Elsa Miranda contributing a smooth vocal, but the samba is better, more exciting. There is a passage for the rhythm section alone which clearly states the ancestry of this music. It reminds one of certain records made on the Denis-Roosevelt Expedition in the Belgian Congo. A grand disc for dancing—or just listening, with clear and forward reproduction.

*Minka* (George Rock, arr. John Niles) (featuring George Rock on trumpet) and *Lassus Trombone* (Henry Fillmore) (featuring Eddie Kusby, trombone); Spike Jones and his other Orchestra. Victor 20-1983.

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● Emphasis is on the *other*, as if to imply that Spike Jones can be someone other than his own zany self but like his historic counterpart. Till Eulenspiegel, his spirit pops up impishly in the midst of the most serious goings-on. Not that I think this record was intended to be taken seriously because *Minka* is a tongue-in-the-cheek take-off on various trumpet styles, amusingly exaggerated. Del Staigers, Ziggy Elman, Clyde McCoy, Charlie Spivak, and Harry James—all get a ribbing. And Lassus does the same thing to trombone players, though not as successfully. A delightful disc!

*It's All Over Now and Aren't You Kind of Glad We Did?* (Gershwin) (from *The Shocking Miss Pilgrim*)" Peggy Lee with Dave Barbour and his Orchestra. Capitol 292.

● An engaging, insinuating voice against a good rhythmic background. The change to double speed in the middle of *It's All Over Now* gives the orchestra a chance to shine. The Gershwin side, a superior musical number right from the first note, is very much in the manner of a French chanson. It reminds one of Lucienne Boyer and I think Peggy Lee did it intentionally. Soft, suggestive, appealing.

*Lies and Gotta Gimme Whatcha Got*; Julie Lee and her Boy Friends. Capitol 308.

● The first is an American chanson—Harlemesque. Bold, brassy, Negroid voice; strong, rhythmic support. *Gotta Gimme Whatcha Got* is suggestive, without the refinement of the French manner. In fact, it borders on the vulgar but is engaging nevertheless. The style is boogie woogie, the orchestra is hot, the solos are good, and Julia Lee projects her stories with a punch.

*Passé and For You, For Me, For Evermore* (from *'The Shocking Miss Pilgrim'*); Margaret Whiting, with Orchestra conducted by Jerry Gray. Capitol 294.

● The bewitching Margaret Whiting at her best with songs that admirably suit her and an appropriately atmospheric orchestra.

*Gotta Get Me Somebody to Love and Honeyfoglin' Time*; Martha Tilton with Orchestra. Capitol 299.

● Martha doesn't lose any of her charm in projecting a song, no matter how trivial. *Gotta Get Me* is very suggestive of Groté's *On the Trail*. Capitol and Martha go educational on the reverse. The label quotes Webster and defines honeyfogle: to wheedle; to cajole; to coax. Martha proceeds to define it vocally. The orchestra adds the rhythm. A good dance disc.

*The Merry Ha! Ha! and That's My Home*; Ella Mae Morse with Ray Linn and his Orchestra. Capitol 301.

● Vocals with a Harlem accent and much bounce from the orchestra but curiously unsatisfying and unconvincing. Both sides sound artificial.

*You Satisfy and Kansas City Mama*; Jesse Price and his Orchestra. (Vocals by Jesse Price). Capitol 295.

● Genuine, slow Negrow blues, adenoidal vocal and all. The orchestral support is hot, with some brilliant solo spots. Maybe these pieces may not be important musically but they are genuine, down-to-earth expressions of a people—and it is from such stuff that folk music grows.

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